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A plant biodiversity effect resolved to a single chromosomal region

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Abstract: Despite extensive evidence that biodiversity promotes plant community productivity, progress towards understanding the mechanistic basis of this effect remains slow, impeding the development of predictive ecological theory and agricultural applications. Here, we analysed non-additive interactions between genetically divergent *Arabidopsis* accessions in experimental plant communities. By combining methods from ecology and quantitative genetics, we identify a major effect locus at which allelic differences between individuals increase the above-ground productivity of communities. In experiments with near-isogenic lines, we show that this diversity effect acts independently of other genomic regions and can be resolved to a single region representing less than 0.3% of the genome. Using plant–soil feedback experiments, we also demonstrate that allelic diversity causes genotype-specific soil legacy responses in a consecutive growing period, even after the original community has disappeared. Our work thus suggests that positive diversity effects can be linked to single Mendelian factors, and that a range of complex community properties can have a simple cause. This may pave the way to novel breeding strategies, focusing on phenotypic properties that manifest themselves beyond isolated individuals; that is, at a higher level of biological organization.

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2 **A plant biodiversity effect resolved to a single chromosomal region**

3

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13

14 **Summary**

15 Despite extensive evidence that biodiversity promotes plant community productivity, progress
16 towards understanding the mechanistic basis of this effect remains slow, impeding the development
17 of predictive ecological theory and agricultural applications. Here, we analysed non-additive
18 interactions between genetically divergent *Arabidopsis* accessions in experimental plant
19 communities. By combining methods from ecology and quantitative genetics, we identified a major
20 effect locus at which allelic differences between individuals increase above-ground productivity of
21 communities. In experiments with near-isogenic lines, we show that this diversity effect acts
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23 than 0.3% of the genome. Using plant-soil-feedback experiments, we also demonstrate that allelic
24 diversity causes genotype-specific soil legacy responses in a consecutive growing period, even after

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the original community has disappeared. Our work thus suggests that positive diversity effects can be linked to single Mendelian factors, and that a range of complex community properties can have a simple cause. This may pave the way to novel breeding strategies, focussing on phenotypic properties that manifest themselves beyond isolated individuals, i.e. at a higher level of biological organisation.

Main Text

More than two decades of plant ecological research and the publication of hundreds of studies have firmly established that positive biodiversity effects, in particular on community yield, are the rule rather than exception and are often substantial^{1,2}. These positive effects of biological diversity on community functioning have been explained by larger community-level resource use promoted by niche complementarity, facilitation, or by reduced negative density-dependent effects of enemies³⁻⁵. Yet our understanding of the particular driving mechanisms remains poor, for several reasons. First, diversity effects are emergent properties that only manifest in comparisons of communities differing in diversity⁶. Second, diversity effects, and the mechanisms that drive these, may change with environmental conditions^{7,8}. Third, while there is no doubt that functional trait differences underly biodiversity effects⁹, trait-based analyses remain to some degree phenomenological because evolutionary forces have led to the formation of trait syndromes, i.e. to sets of highly correlated traits that reflect fundamental trade-offs between ecological strategies^{10,11}. The observed variation in traits thus is confounded with evolutionary history¹², and it remains almost impossible to distinguish the traits that are true drivers of biodiversity effects from traits that are merely correlated. It therefore remains difficult to develop predictive ecological theory and apply it, for example, in breeding and agriculture.

Most biodiversity research to date has focused on variation among species, but experimental¹³, theoretical¹⁴, and observational¹⁵ studies have shown that positive diversity effects on productivity

also occur at levels of organization above (e.g. landscape level) and below species (e.g. genotype level). A substantial part of the trait variation apparent in plant communities occurs within species¹⁶, and increased intra-specific variation can have similar effects as inter-specific trait variation in low-diversity systems^{13,17,18}. Despite qualitative differences, there may therefore be commonalities of trait variation within and between species with respect to effects and mechanisms, indicating that studies at the genotype level may provide some insights into effects of species-level variation and vice versa. A methodological advantage of intra-specific biodiversity studies is that genetic methods can circumvent some of the problems encountered in species-level diversity studies. Specifically, crosses between genotypes allow trait variation among individuals to be re-arranged¹⁹ without confounding with population structure or differentiation into ecological strategies. However, genetic approaches are normally used to study properties of individuals rather than emergent properties of communities. Here, we demonstrate in a case study how the genetic approach can be harnessed to identify the genetic underpinnings of biodiversity effects.

Results

Using model plant communities (Fig. 1a), we screened ten pair-wise mixtures of genetically divergent natural accessions of *Arabidopsis thaliana* for which mapping populations are publicly available (Methods). Mixture communities of the two genetically divergent accessions Bayreuth (Bay) and Shadhara (Sha) reproducibly exhibited positive net biodiversity effects, i.e. mixtures produced a higher community-level shoot biomass than the average of their monocultures. This depended on soil conditions, with effects that were essentially absent on peat-rich soil but grew to an overyielding of 16% with increasing amounts of sand in the substrate (sand content × diversity: ANOVA $F_{1,160} = 4.57$, $P < 0.05$; Fig. 1b and Supplementary Figure 1a). Analysis by additive partitioning⁶ revealed that these community-level biodiversity effects were due to complementarity rather than selection effects (sand content × complementarity effect, ANOVA $F_{1,77} = 7.21$, $P < 0.01$;

75 Supplementary Figure 1b). Specifically, in our study both accessions benefited from growing in
76 mixed communities.
77
78
79 To analyse the genetic basis of the positive diversity effect in mixed Bay-Sha communities, we
80 performed quantitative trait locus (QTL) mapping using publicly available recombinant inbred lines
81 (RILs). These RILs are largely homozygous (Fig. 1c) and have been derived from a cross between
82 the Bay and Sha accessions, followed by multiple subsequent rounds of selfing²⁰. For efficient
83 mapping, we capitalized on a so called competition diallel. Traditional diallel designs systematically
84 cross sets of parental lines realizing all possible combinations and are used in breeding to determine
85 the genetic basis of traits; specifically, diallel analysis partitions the trait variation of crosses into
86 additive contributions²¹ of parental lines (general combining abilities; GCA) and cross-specific
87 effects (specific combining abilities; SCA), with the latter interpreted as consequences of
88 dominance or epistasis. By substituting individuals and crosses with communities and mixtures, the
89 principle of diallels can be applied to the analyses of biodiversity effects in communities²², which
90 we did here (Fig. 1c, d). In this context, the distinction between maternal and paternal effects ceases
91 to apply, simplifying the design to a half-diallel. SCAs then quantify the deviations of mixture
92 yields from expectations based on additive average contributions of the two genotypes. We
93 combined 18 RILs and the two parental accessions Bay and Sha in a diallel, in four replicate blocks,
94 on sand-rich soil. We detected significant positive genotype diversity effects on above-ground
95 biomass production (Fig. 2a, ANOVA $F_{1,189} = 10.47$, $P < 0.01$), indicating that the traits that promote
96 biodiversity effects are heritable. As expected, a large proportion of the variation in SCA remained
97 unexplained. We therefore tested for allelic diversity effects on SCAs at 69 marker positions. Both a
98 marker regression technique and a standard QTL procedure revealed a major effect locus on the

99 lower arm of chromosome four where allelic diversity at the community level resulted in higher
100 SCAs (Fig. 2b and Supplementary Figure 2).

101

102

103 With 18 recombinant lines, mapping resolution was limited and other effect loci or genetic
104 interactions among loci may have gone unnoticed. We thus aimed at resolving the allelic diversity
105 effect further to a single Mendelian factor. For this, we isolated a family of 19 near isogenic lines
106 (NILs) that genetically varied only on the lower arm of chromosome 4, and in which we selected
107 and inferred further recombination events by molecular markers and whole-genome re-sequencing
108 (Fig. 3a,b, Supplementary Figure 3). With these NILs, we performed a second diallel experiment,
109 replicated once on peat-rich soil where we expected no diversity effects and once on sand-rich soil
110 where we expected positive diversity effects. Indeed, no locus was associated with positive allelic
111 diversity effects on above-ground biomass on peat-rich soil (Fig. 3c). In contrast, on sand-rich soil
112 we found a positive allelic diversity effects at a single locus (overyielding of 4.5%, Fig. 3d, $P <$
113 0.01), represented by a region of approx. 310 kb in size (termed locus Chr4@16.92: between 16.92
114 to 17.23 Mb). The overyielding of allelic mixtures of otherwise isogenic lines was transgressive:
115 communities that contained individuals carrying different alleles at locus Chr4@16.92 in the NIL
116 diallel produced more biomass than the most productive mono-allelic community ($t = 2.32$; $P =$
117 0.02). This suggests some form of functional complementarity between genotypes - relating to,
118 without reference to a specific mechanisms at play, a phenomenon of two alleles positively
119 interacting with each other when distributed *amongst* homozygous individuals of a community.

120 Using structural equation models, we tested whether these allelic diversity effects were related to
121 observed genotypic differences in shoot phenology or disease symptoms, but this was not the case
122 (Supplementary Figure 4). Interestingly, however, this analysis showed that allelic diversity already
123 manifested itself in increased community-level leaf cover early in the experiment, when plants just

124 started to produce flowering bolts (Supplementary Figure 4), indicating that the effect persisted
 125 through time. The allelic diversity effect we found, could, in principle, strictly depend on the
 126 genetic background. To rule out this possibility, we compared monocultures and mixtures of a
 127 second, independent pair of near-isogenic lines on both peat-rich or sand-rich soil (Supplementary
 128 Figure 5). Again, we found a significant allelic diversity effect on above-ground biomass that
 129 depended on soil (ANOVA $F_{1,164} = 4.17$, $P=0.04$ for soil x allelic diversity; 5.4% net overyielding
 130 on sand), and a significant effect of soil on the complementarity effect ($F_{1,82}=4.8$, $P=0.03$).
 131 In conclusion, two consecutive diallel experiments using only 37 recombinant lines were sufficient
 132 to resolve a plant biodiversity effect to a genomic region representing ~2.5% of the Arabidopsis
 133 genome (containing approx. 86 genes), which emphasizes the extreme efficiency of our approach.
 134 Our work suggests that biodiversity effects between genotypes can be dissected into discrete genetic
 135 elements that have major additive contributions.
 136
 137
 138 There is growing evidence that productivity responses in plant biodiversity experiments^{4,5,23,24} and
 139 their increase through time²⁵ are related to diversity-dependent soil conditioning. To test whether
 140 allelic diversity causes effects through soil conditioning also in our study, we performed soil
 141 feedback experiments. Our objectives were twofold: first, we were interested whether there were
 142 general effects of allelic diversity on soil quality; second, we aimed to test whether allelic
 143 interactions occurred among plants that did not grow simultaneously, i.e. whether allelic effects
 144 were mediated through time by soil legacy. We assessed soil conditioning by growing indicator
 145 plants (“phytometers”²⁵) on soil collected from both diallel experiments²⁶ when these were harvested
 146 (Fig. 1d and Supplementary Discussion). The phytometers were the two parental accessions Bay or
 147 Sha for the RIL diallel, and two near-isogenic lines in the NIL diallel.

148 We indeed found phytometer-specific soil legacy responses that depended on the allelic diversity of
149 the communities that had conditioned the soils in the preceeding growing period (Fig. 4; RIL
150 diallel: diversity at marker MSAT4.9 \times phytometer; ANOVA $F_{1,166} = 6.48$; $P = 0.012$; NIL diallel:
151 diversity at locus Chr4@16.92 \times phytometer; $F_{1,166} = 5.61$; $P = 0.02$; Supplementary Table 1;
152 Supplementary Figure 6). These phytometer-specific responses to soil legacy were independent of
153 differences in previous community productivity and associated resource depletion (the effects
154 remained statistically significant and comparable in size when first adjusting for community
155 biomass in linear models). However, the effects differed between phytometers and experiments, i.e.
156 they depended on environmental or genetic context (Supplementary Discussion). This is not
157 surprising in light of the complex mechanisms involved. Developing a full understanding of the
158 biological mechanisms at play will thus require further experiments, including soil analyses.
159 Nonetheless, these experiments demonstrate that allelic differences at a single QTL cause
160 interactions between individuals within a community and also, mediated by a soil-borne factor,
161 through time. The latter can be perceived as an “extended phenotype” sensu Dawkins²⁷, the
162 expression of which depends on interactions between group members. We were intrigued to find
163 that we could, in principle, have genetically mapped the allelic diversity effect solely through its
164 soil legacy; in other words, by QTL mapping this extended phenotypic property of allelic mixtures
165 (Supplementary Figure 6e,f; Supplementary Discussion).

166

167

168 **Discussion**

169 Our study systematically resolves a biodiversity effect, once identified in a specific set of
170 interacting plants and a given environmental context, to between-individual allelic differences in a
171 single, small chromosomal region. So far, complex emergent properties of plant communities did not
172 necessarily seem genetically tractable, especially since quantitative traits of individuals often are

173 polygenic²⁸ if not omnigenic in nature²⁹. A single case study obviously is limited with respect to
174 generalizations, but we consider it possible that in many cases between-individual functional
175 complementarity and resulting biodiversity effects might instead have a relatively simple genetic
176 architecture – a feature not uncommon for other types of biotic interactions³⁰. Our genetic approach
177 is extensible to the study of interactions among other genotype combinations, and, with
178 modifications, among species, and could thus lead to fundamental new insights into the traits and
179 genetic underpinnings of biodiversity effects in more natural systems. Equally importantly, the
180 genetic tractability of such effects may allow efficient breeding of genotype mixtures that support
181 increased yields through some form of functional complementarity while maintaining low variation
182 in economically relevant traits. Biodiversity effects have received relatively little attention in
183 breeding and conventional agriculture, with the notable exception of crop rotation³¹ and
184 intercropping of cultivars and species^{32–34}. Instead, sustaining a growing global human population
185 heavily depends on increasing nutrient inputs to crop production systems³⁵, on breeding of single
186 genotypes for monoculture performance³⁶, and on the use of within-individual diversity effects
187 termed heterosis³⁷. Our approach might help bypass constraints imposed on the performance of
188 single genotypes, by shifting breeding efforts from the individual to the system level³⁸.

189

190

191 **Methods**

192 Germplasm

193 The Shadhara and Bayreuth accessions were kindly provided by Nuno Pires (University of Zurich)
194 and had originally been obtained from the Nottingham Arabidopsis stock center (NASC). We
195 selected these two genotypes following an initial screen of ten pairs of accessions, because they
196 exhibited an above-average but not extreme biodiversity effect when grown together on sand-rich
197 soil, and because a high-quality and frequently used RIL population is publicly available²⁰. It also

was interesting that the biodiversity effect vanished on peat-rich soil. The 18 RILs (representing the “RIL-minimal set” and line 33RV191 used to generate NILs (all contained in the core-pop set of 165 lines) were ordered from the Versailles Arabidopsis stock center (<http://publiclines.versailles.inra.fr>) and propagated in a growth chamber. A Bay×Sha RIL (33RV191) was confirmed to be heterozygous at two PCR marker positions on chromosome 4 (Table S2). Upon selfing of this line, the two NILs 33RV191-Sha and 33RV191-Bay were isolated (referred to as NIL-Bay or NIL-Sha hereafter), and their genomes were re-sequenced as described below. Using the same procedure, an independent pair of near-isogenic lines was derived upon selfing the Bay×Sha RIL 33RV77, giving rise to NILs 33RV77-Sha and 33RV77-Bay. Furthermore, after selfing of another single heterozygous F₁₀ individual of line 33RV191, we screened 160 offspring for recombination between the ShaBa5, ShaBa6 and ShaBa8 markers on chromosome four. Upon selfing of 23 putative recombinant offspring, we isolated 19 homozygous recombinant lines for which we confirmed a recombination event in the region by PCR. We then performed whole-genome re-sequencing to confirm the isogenic background and to infer recombination breakpoints for this heterogeneous inbred family (referred to as NILs throughout the text) as described below.

214

215 Soils and growth conditions

Soils consisted of different mixtures of a peat and nutrient rich soil (Einheitserde ED73; pH ~5.8, N 250 mg L⁻¹; P₂O₅ 300 mg L⁻¹; 75% organic matter content; Gebrüder Patzer GmbH, Sinntal-Jossa, Germany) and finely grained quartz sand. Pot for all mixture experiments were 7×7×8 cm in size. The experiment using the parental lines Bay and Sha was replicated on a soil quality gradient with sand contents of 0%, 40%, 75% and 80%, which resulted in a near-linear decrease of productivity from the highest to lowest ED73 content, likely through a dilution of soil nutrients (Fig. S1). For the rough-mapping of the diversity effect using RILs, we used a mixture of 80% sand

223 and 20% ED73. For the fine-mapping diallel using NILs, we used either a 80%:20% or a 20%:80%
224 sand:ED73 mixture.

225 Seeds were sown directly onto soils (approx. 10 seeds per position, 4 positions per pot, Fig. 1a).
226 The pots were placed in growth chambers or greenhouse compartments and covered with plastic
227 lids to maintain a high humidity for germination and initial seedling establishment. Additional light
228 was provided if necessary, achieving a photoperiod of 14–16 hours. Day-time and night-time
229 temperatures were maintained around 20–25 °C and 16–20 °C, respectively. Seedlings were thinned
230 continuously until a single healthy seedling remained per position.

231 Once seedlings were established, the pots were placed in a greenhouse compartment with automated
232 watering (every 2 days). In summer 2015, daytime temperatures were extremely high, and the first
233 block of the RIL diallel was therefore grown in a growth chamber with full climate control (8 h
234 night/16 h day; 60% humidity; 18/23°C night/day temperature). The second block was grown in the
235 growth chamber for a month before it was re-located to the regular greenhouse compartment.

236 Pots that did not contain all four originally planted individuals were discarded. Plants were
237 harvested 43–51 days after sowing, with the specific harvest date determined by the occurrence of
238 approx. 5–10 dehiscent siliques on the earliest flowering genotypes within a block.

239 After the diallels were harvested, soil feedback trials were established by dividing the soil of a pot
240 into two smaller pots 5.5×5.5×6.0 cm in size. The respective phytometers (Bay or Sha for the RIL
241 diallel, 33RV191-Sha or 33RV191-Bay for the NIL diallel) were sown directly onto the soil. Again,
242 seeds were oversown and seedlings thinned continuously until a single healthy individual remained.

243 Phytometer experiments were harvested either 36 days after sowing (peat-rich soil remaining after
244 the NIL diallel, harvested early because plant roots started to grow out of the pots) or 49–58 days
245 after sowing (sand-rich soil, each block was harvested on a single day). For all experiments, the
246 position of the individual pots was randomized across trays during seedling establishment, and
247 across watering tables after seedling establishment. Throughout the experiment, pots were re-

248 positioned randomly within trays and tables every 7–10 days. Pots were watered *ad libitum*, and in
249 case of high population densities of dark-winged fungus gnats, the systemic insecticide ActaraG
250 (Syngenta Agro AG) was applied according to the manufacturers recommendation. After
251 harvesting, plant biomass was dried at 65°C for at least three days before weighing. We determined
252 early rosette cover in the NIL diallel by photographing pots 27 days after sowing and estimating the
253 horizontally projected community-level rosette area using the Easy Leaf Area software³⁹. We
254 further recorded the occurrence of leaf disease symptoms (wilting, blotching, or early senescence)
255 30 days after sowing. As a proxy for flowering time in the NIL diallel, we measured flowering bolt
256 height of all plants 35 days after sowing; by then, >98% of the individuals had a flowering bolt
257 longer than 0.5 cm). The NIL diallel was harvested 50 days after sowing.

258

259 Experimental designs

260 To test the soil-dependency of biodiversity effects in mixed Shadhara-Bayreuth communities, four
261 soil substrates varying in sand content were prepared as described above. We then grew 12 replicate
262 monocultures of each accession plus 24 replicate mixtures per soil type (total of 48×4= 192 pots).

263 The RIL diallel consisted of a half diallel replicated in four blocks. All pair-wise RIL combinations
264 were realized once per block except for RIL monocultures which were replicated twice. For the
265 follow-up soil feedback experiment, we re-used soil from only the first two blocks of the diallel. We
266 re-mixed the soil of each single pot after harvesting the plants, and re-distributed it into two smaller
267 plots that were sown with either a Shadhara or Bayreuth parental genotype that served as
268 phytometers.

269 The NIL diallel used for fine-mapping was realized in a single block that contained all pair-wise
270 combinations of the 19 NILs including monocultures. The subsequent soil feedback part of the
271 experiment was realized as described for the RIL diallel, using either 33RV191-Bay or 33RV191-
272 Sha genotypes as phytometers. To test if the allelic diversity effect was strictly dependent on genetic

background, we grew 21 replicate monocultures of each NIL 33RV77-Bay or 33RV77-Sha, plus 42 replicate mixtures, on either peat-rich (80% ED73, 20% sand) or sand-rich (20% ED73, 80% sand) soil (total of $42 \times 2 \times 2 = 168$ pots).

Genotyping and line re-sequencing

PCR-based genotyping assays (Table S2) were developed based on deletions in the Sha genome as predicted by the Polymorph tool (<http://polymorph.weigelworld.org>)⁴⁰.

Barcoded libraries for genome re-sequencing were prepared using the Illumina Nextera DNA Library Prep Kit (FC-121-1031, Illumina Inc. San Diego, CA) in combination with the Nextera Index Kit (96 indices, FC-121-1012) and pair-end sequenced on an Illumina HiSeq 2500 (2x150 bp, rapid run). The clustering and sequencing were performed at the Functional Genomics Center Zurich. Sequences were aligned to the Arabidopsis genome (Col-0 genome, TAIR version 10) using BWA⁴¹, aligned read sorting and variant calling were performed using samtools⁴². Aligned genomic sequences of the parental accessions Bay-0 and Sha were downloaded from the 1001 genomes project data center (<http://1001genomes.org>). The VCF-file produced by the samtools software was loaded into the R Statistical Software⁴³, where the subsequent analyses were performed: variant calls were filtered (for differences in genotype calls between the Sha and Bay genomes, quality of variant calls, population-level minimal minor allele frequency 0.2; maximum heterozygosity 0.2). Inference of genotype calls at polymorphic sites was performed as described previously⁴⁴ and inference of parental alleles was improved using functionality implemented in the MPR package⁴⁴. Genotype reconstruction was then performed in R using a simple hidden Markov model as implemented in the R package HMM, with hidden state starting probabilities (Bay, Het or Sha) all set to 1/3, and transition probabilities from one state to itself set to 0.99998 and to the other two states set to 0.00001 each. Emission probabilities of genotype calls given a state, e.g. Bay, were set to 0.35, 0.25, 0.25, 0.15 for genotypes calls Bay, Het, Sha or missing, etc.

299 Statistical analyses

300 We analyzed data from the diallel experiments using linear mixed models summarized by analysis
 301 of variance (ANOVA). The model terms included, in this order, the general combining abilities
 302 (GCA) of genotypes (a factor with 20 levels in the RIL diallel and 19 levels in the NIL diallel), the
 303 genotype diversity in the pot (GD, 1 or 2 genotypes), the allele identity in the genotype
 304 monocultures (A, Sha or Bay), the allelic diversity in the genotype mixtures (AD, 1 [Sha/Sha or
 305 Bay/Bay] or 2 [Sha/Bay]), and the genotype composition planted in the pot (comp). The factor GCA
 306 was created by superimposing the model matrices for factors coding for the first and second
 307 genotype (factors with 20 and 19 levels for RIL and NIL diallels, respectively). The significance of
 308 GD, A, and AD were determined using F-tests with comp as error term (denominator). A and AD
 309 were encoded in such a way that these contrasts applied only to genotype monocultures and
 310 mixtures, respectively. Technically, this was achieved by including a third level in the factor that did
 311 not vary in the other group. Fitting A and AD after GD therefore only explained variance in these
 312 subsets. The diallel model was extended by additional terms and the corresponding interactions
 313 when these applied; specifically, the RIL diallel included a block effect. The NIL diallel included
 314 terms for soil type, and interactions of all the terms above with soil type (for example, soil×AD was
 315 tested using soil×comp as error term). The soil feedback experiments included further interactions
 316 with phytometer (RIL and NIL diallel), and phytometer×soil (NIL diallel). Effects of pot biomass in
 317 the diallel (diallel biomass and diallel biomass × soil) were accounted for in these linear models, and
 318 data were square-root transformed to obtain normally distributed residuals.

319 Specific combining abilities for mapping were calculated directly, within blocks, by solving the
 320 linear model $m = X \text{ GCA} + \text{SCA}$ where X is the design matrix describing the genotype composition
 321 of a pot. Monoculture SCAs were also determined but not used for QTL mapping of allelic diversity
 322 within RIL mixtures. In the RIL diallel, the SCAs of each genotype composition was first calculated

per block and then aggregated over all blocks using least-square estimates. Marker regression was performed contrasting SCAs of mono-allelic RIL mixtures (“BB” and “SS” compositions) with mixed-allelic mixtures (“BS” compositions) using the `glht`-function provided by the `multcomp` package⁴³. QTL mapping was also performed using the `R/qlt` package and interval mapping (`scanone`-function), with both mono-allelic compositions at a given locus re-coded as to the same level (“mono-allelic”) and compared against mixed-allelic compositions. Genome-wide significance was assessed by resampling (n=5000).

To test the relationships of allelic diversity effects on SCAs with measured traits, we developed multip-group (sand-rich and peat-rich soil) structural equation models using `lavaan` (<http://lavaan.ugent.be>). Allelic diversity at Chr4@16.92 was included as exogenous variable; endogeneous variables were two metrics of trait variation among genotypes (which are possible indicators of complementarity), and early community-level projected leaf area (see above). Trait variation was quantified as difference among bolt length of the genotypes (square-root-transformed), and as difference in the occurrence of leaf disease symptoms (a binary variable). Starting with a near-saturated model, the modelled paths were simplified in an educated way until a minimal model was found for which the model-implied and observed covariance structure among variables did not differ significantly (X^2 -test).

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Author contributions

S.E.W. conceptualized and designed the research (with input from P.A.N.) and performed the experiments. Both authors performed the analyses and wrote the manuscript. Both authors revised and approved the final version of the manuscript.

447 **Data availability**

448 The datasets described in the paper and a functional annotation of the 86 genes within the fine-
449 mapped diversity QTL are available through the Zenodo data repository
450 (DOI:10.5281/zenodo.1254563). Sequencing data are deposited in the NCBI Sequence Archive
451 (accession SRP149077). Analysis scripts are available from the authors upon request.

452

453 **Competing interests**

454 The authors declare no competing financial interests.

455

456 **Figures**

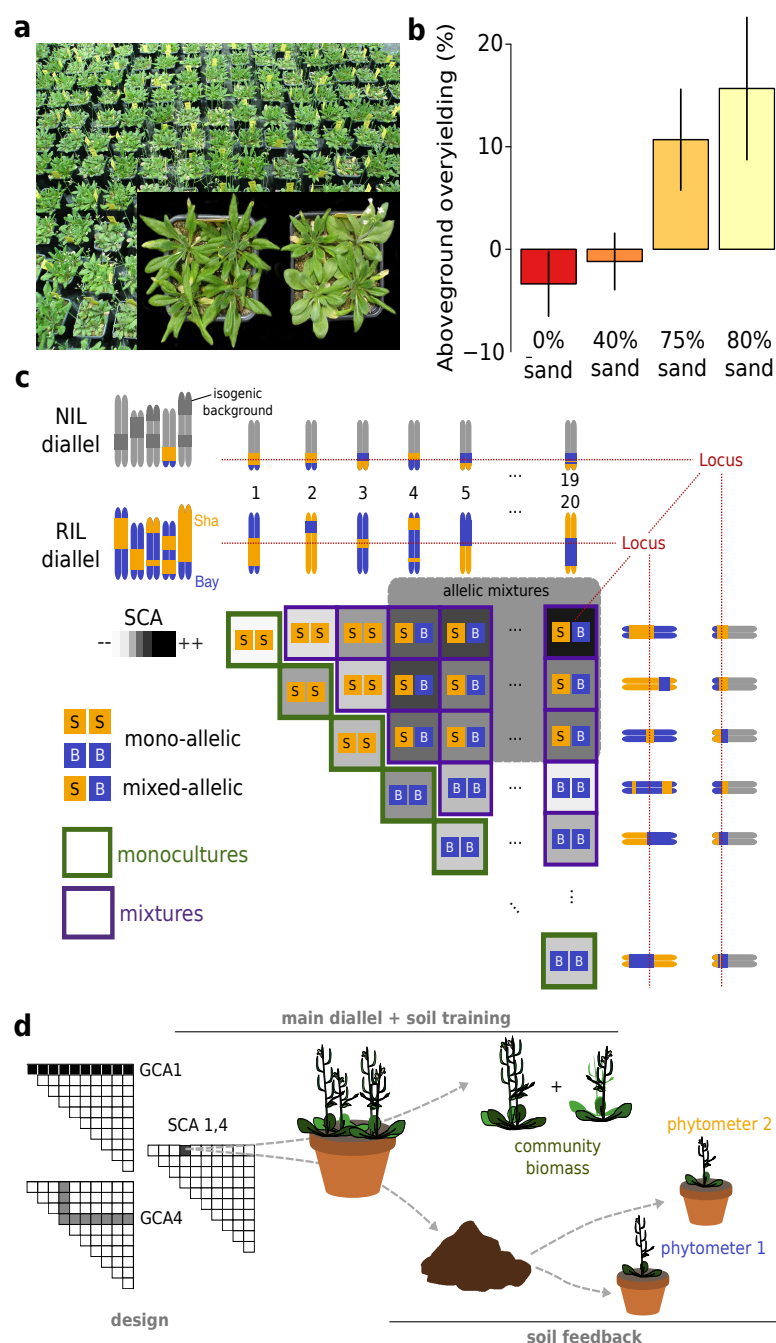


Figure 1 | Combining ecological concepts and genetic methods. **a**, Pot systems used to study diversity effects in pair-wise genotype mixtures. The inset shows a Recombinant Inbred Line (RIL) monoculture (left) and mixture (right). **b**, Net diversity effects in Bay-Sha mixtures along a peat-sand substrate gradient. Error bars denote standard errors of means (s.e.m.). n = 164 pots **c**, Outline of the diallel design and the genotypes used throughout this paper. 18 RILs and the two parental accession, or 19 near-isogenic lines (NILs) were each placed in competition with each other, allowing to assess i) effects of genotypic mixture (i.e. diagonal vs off-diagonal), or ii) effects of allelic mixture at a given locus

across all genotype mixtures (i.e. comparing SS and BB vs. SB) on pot productivity. **d**, Outline of the experimental procedure used in this work. Colored labels indicate measured variables. GCA = general combining ability; SCA = specific combining ability.

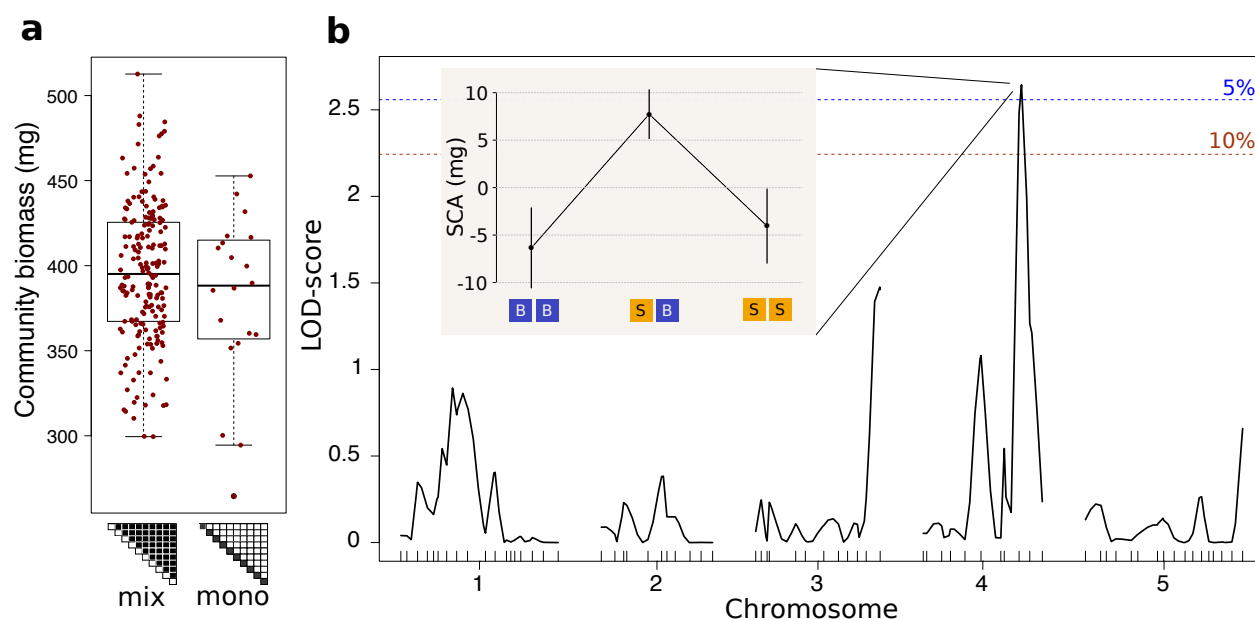


Figure 2 | Allelic diversity at a major effect locus increases community productivity. a, Pot-level productivity in dependence of community type (mix = RIL mixtures vs mono = RIL monocultures), showing positive genotype mixture effects in the diallel and on sand-rich soil (values aggregated across four blocks, $n = 871$ pots / 210 compositions) Boxes show interquartile ranges with medians; whiskers indicate data ranges up to 1.5 times the interquartile range from the box; other values are shown individually (circled dots). **b**, Quantitative trait locus interval mapping of allelic diversity effects on specific combining ability (SCA). Vertical lines denote 10% and 5% genome-wide significance levels, dashes above the x axis indicate genetic markers. The inset shows estimated SCA (\pm s.e.m.) across genotype mixtures that exhibit different allelic compositions at marker MSAT4.9 on chromosome four. LOD: logarithm of the odd.

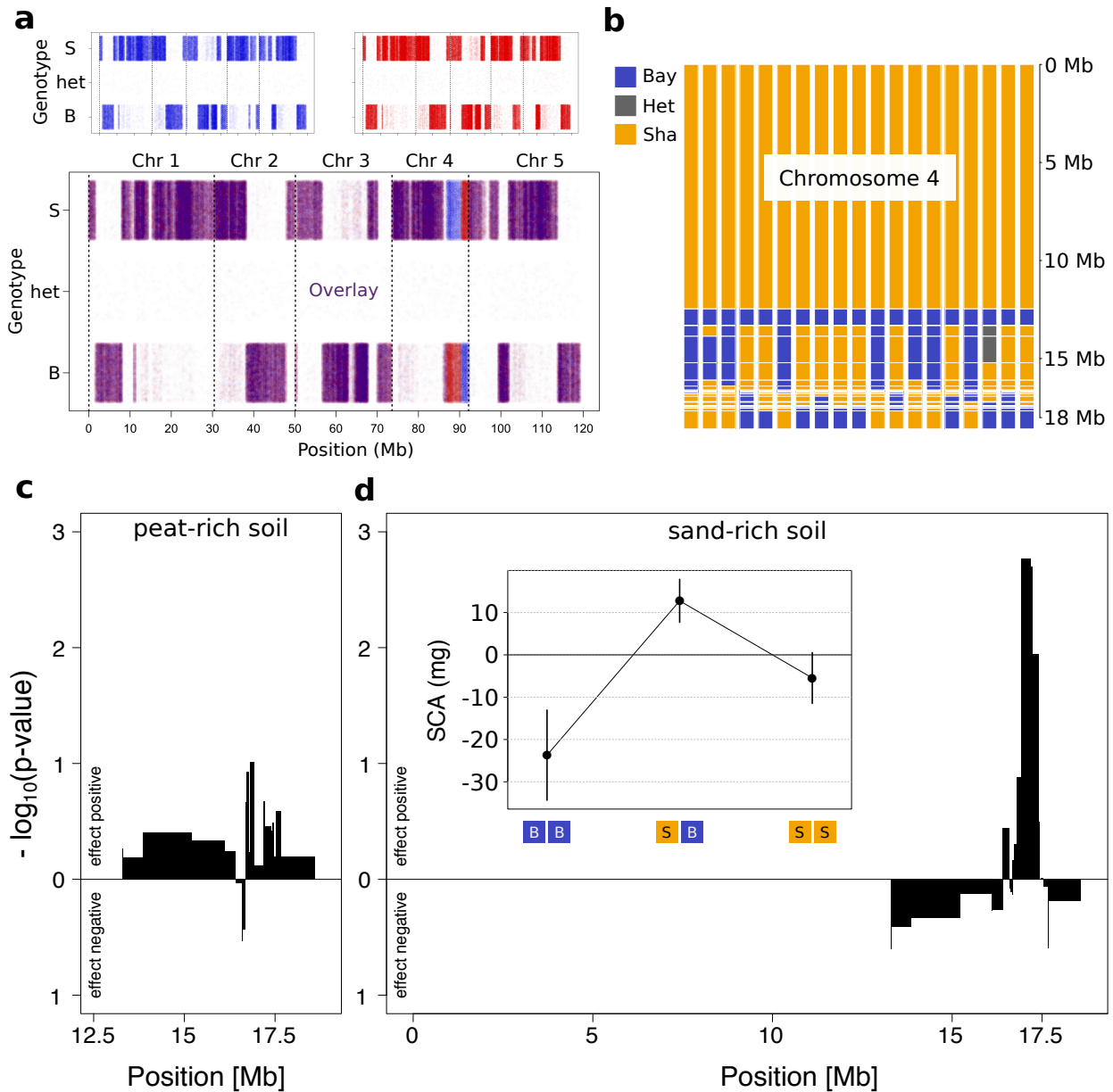
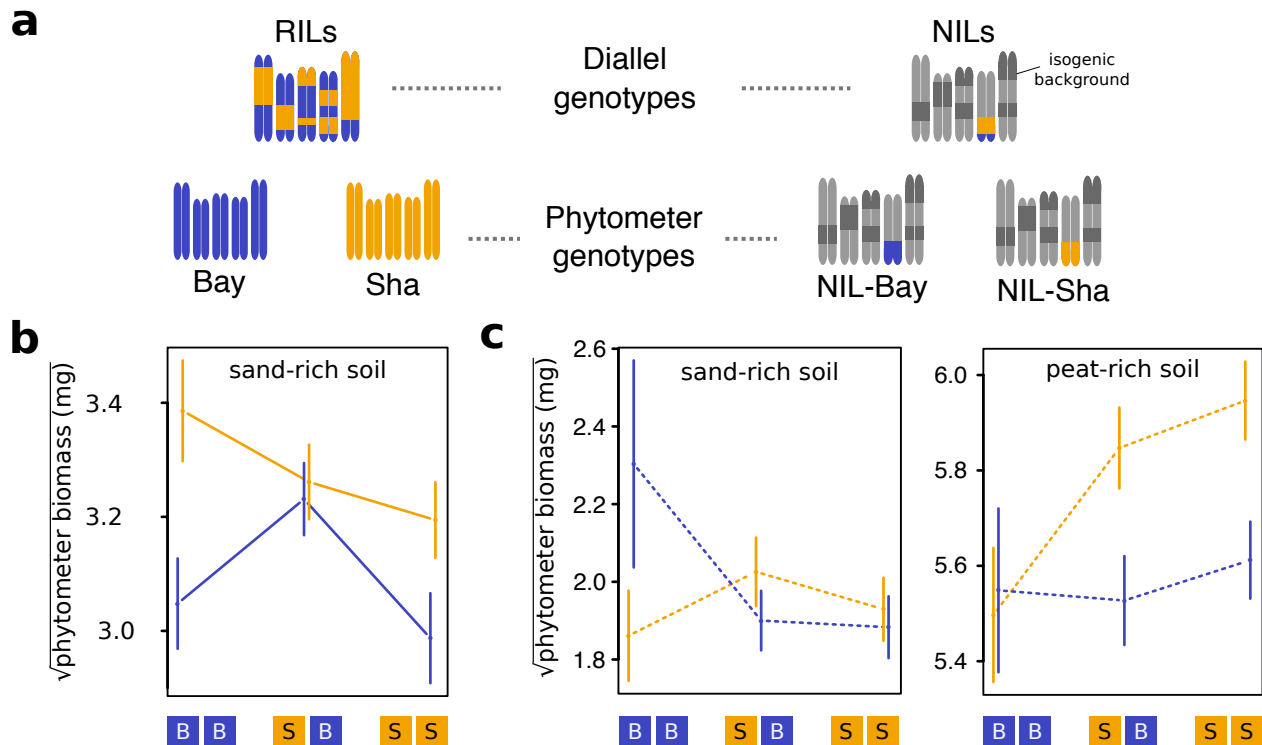


Figure 3 | Resolving soil \times allelic diversity interactions to a single Mendelian factor. **a**, Re-sequencing of near-isogenic lines (NILs) differing only on lower arm of chromosome four for fine-mapping. Shown are genotype calls at all polymorphic sites across the genome (B = homozygous for the Bay allele, het = heterozygous, S = Sha allele) in either NIL r10 (blue, top left) or NIL r96 (red, top right), as well as an overlay of the two line's genotype calls (bottom). **b**, Reconstructed genotypes across chromosome four of the 19 NILs used for fine-mapping. Each bar represents a single NIL. **c**, **d**, Map of allelic diversity effects across chromosome four, on either peat-rich soil (c), or sand-rich soil

486 (d). The widths of the bars indicate the size of the regions in which no recombination events were
 487 inferred across the whole population. Inset in (d) shows the mean \pm s.e.m. of SCAs across allelic
 488 compositions at the diversity effect QTL.

489



490 **Figure 4 | Allelic diversity effects persist across a generation through their soil legacy.** **a**, Scheme of
 491 the genotype-combinations used for either the recombinant inbred lines (RILs) vs. near-isogenic lines
 492 (NILs) diallels (top), and the phytometer genotypes used in the soil-feedback phase (bottom). **b**,
 493 phytometer performance (Bay or Sha, mean \pm s.e.m.) on legacy soil derived from RIL mixtures with
 494 different allelic compositions at marker MSAT4.9. **c**, phytometer performance (NIL-Bay or NIL-Sha,
 495 mean \pm s.e.m.) on legacy soil derived from NIL mixtures with different allelic compositions at locus
 496 Chr4@16.92 on either sand-rich (left) or peat-rich (right) soil. Values were square-root transformed for
 497 analyses, n = 851 and 720 pots for RIL and NIL diallels, respectively.

498

499

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522 Supplementary Tables

523 **Supplementary Table 1 | Legacy effects of soils conditioned in RIL and NIL diallel**
524 **experiments.** Effects were quantified using two phytometers (factor ‘phy’; Sha and Bay accessions
525 in RIL diallel, and near-isogenic lines bearing Sha and Bay allele at putative effect locus in NIL
526 diallel). The NIL diallel additionally was replicated on substrates differing in sand content (factor
527 ‘soil’). The term ‘GCA’ (general combining abilities) indicates average genotype-specific soil
528 conditioning effects on phytometer yields. ‘SCA’ (specific combining abilities) captures deviations
529 in yield from additive predictions made using GCAs. Within SCA, the following contrasts were
530 tested: GD: Genotype diversity, i.e. whether genotype monocultures differed in feedback effects
531 from two-genotype mixtures; A: allele-specific differences at marker MSAT4.9 (RIL diallel) and
532 Chr4@16.92 (NIL diallel) within genotype monocultures; AD: allele-diversity effects within
533 genotype mixtures. df and ddf indicate nominator and denominator degrees of freedom of
534 corresponding F-tests. *** P<0.001; ** P<0.01; * P<0.05; (*) P<0.1; n.s. not significant.

Terms and contrasts	RIL diallel			NIL diallel		
	df	Denominator: ddf	Signif.	df	Denominator: ddf	Signif.
GCA	18	comp: 167	(*)	18	comp: 168	n.s.
SCA						
GD	1	comp: 167	(*)	1	comp: 168	n.s.
A	1	comp: 167	n.s.	1	comp: 168	n.s.
AD	1	comp: 167	n.s.	1	comp: 168	n.s.
Phy × GCA	18	phy × comp: 166	n.s.	18	phy × comp: 168	*
Phy × SCA						
Phy × GD	1	phy × comp: 166	n.s.	1	phy × comp: 168	n.s.
Phy × A	1	phy × comp: 166	n.s.	1	phy × comp: 168	n.s.
Phy × AD	1	phy × comp: 166	**	1	phy × comp: 168	*
Soil × GCA				18	soil × comp: 150	n.s.
Soil × SCA						
Soil × GD				1	soil × comp: 150	n.s.
Soil × A				1	soil × comp: 150	n.s.
Soil × AD				1	soil × comp: 150	n.s.
		does not apply				
Phy × Soil × GCA				18	phy × soil × comp: 146	n.s.
Phy × Soil × SCA						
Phy × Soil × GD				1	phy × soil × comp: 146	***
Phy × Soil × A				1	phy × soil × comp: 146	n.s.
Phy × Soil × AD				1	phy × soil × comp: 146	n.s.

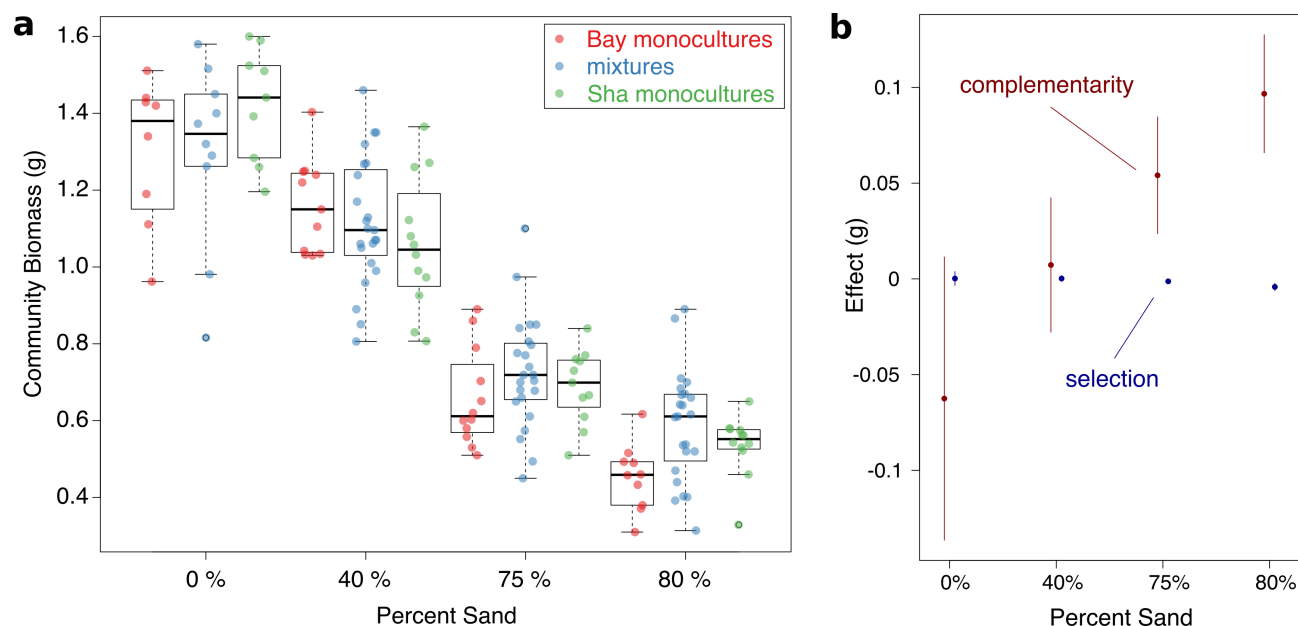
537 **Supplementary Table 2: PCR markers used in this study.**

Primer	Assay	Sequence	Predicted location	Pred. fragment sizes (Sha/Bay)
SW-182	ShaBa5	ACGTATTTCGATGTATGGTCCTTG	Chr4: 16044156	550/664
SW-183		TCACGTGAATCGTATTCGTTGAAG		
SW-184	ShaBa6	CTTCTCCGCTTCAACCTCTGC	Chr4: 17709750	600/632
SW-185		AATCCAGGATTCAGAGTTGCTTTC		
SW-188	ShaBa8	TTGATTAGGGCTACGAGGATAAGG	Chr4: 16707214	408/609
SW-189		GAGTCTATTAATTATGCTTGGTGC		

538

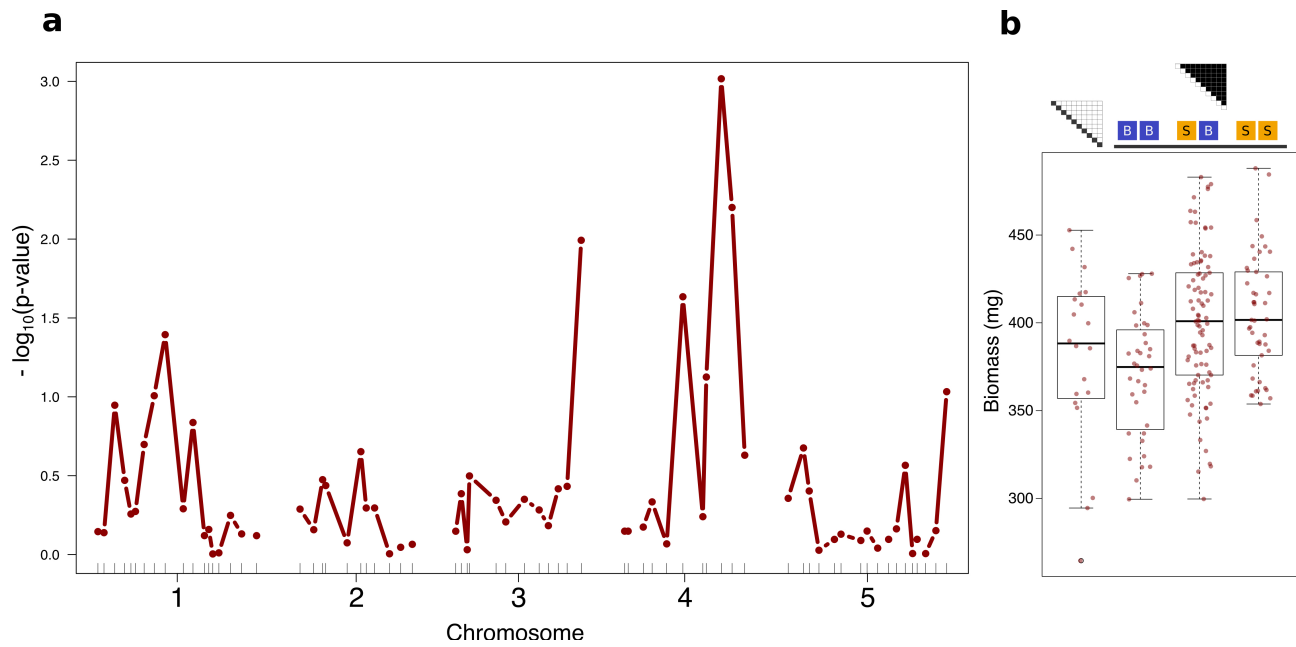
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540 Supplementary Figures

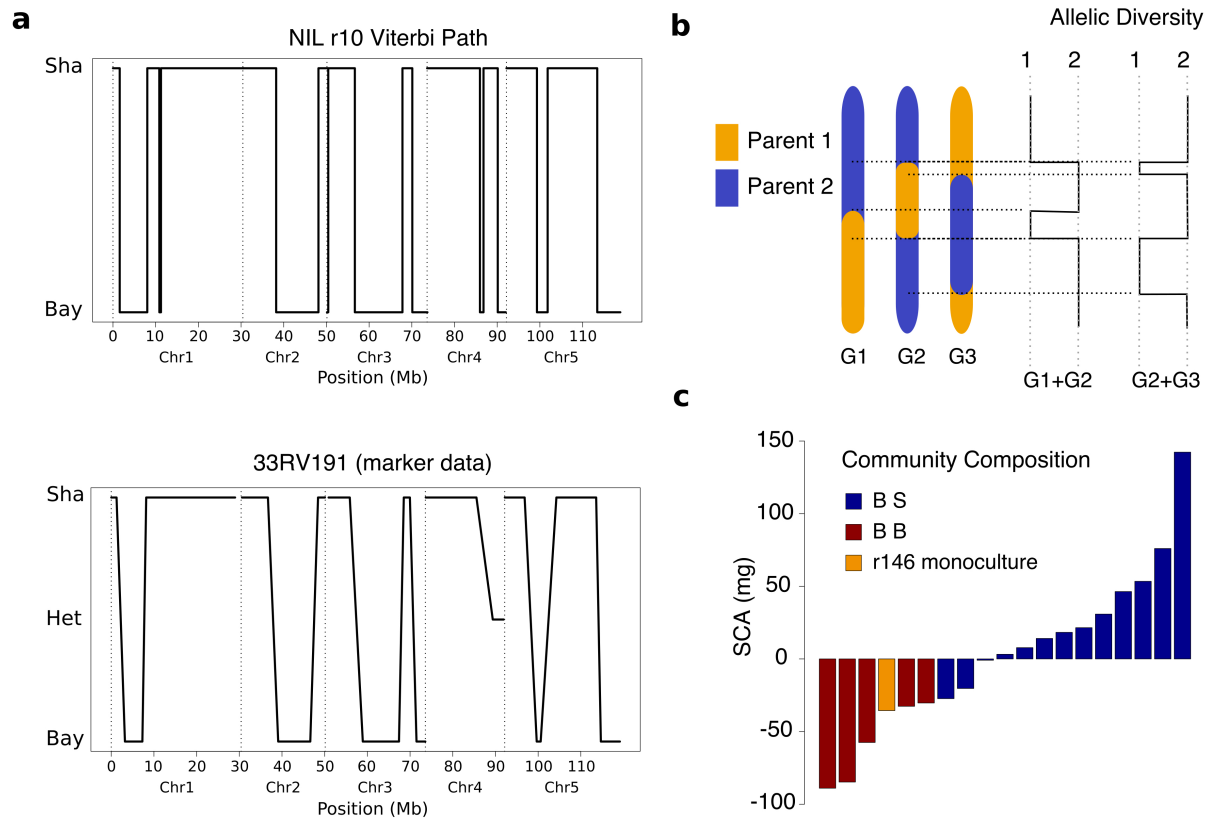


542 **Supplementary Figure 1 | Productivity and complementarity in Bay-Sha mixtures across a**
 543 **peat-sand gradient. a**, Pot-level biomass measurements of Sha and Bay monocultures or pair-wise
 544 mixtures along a sand/peat substrate gradient. n = 164 pots **b**, Complementarity and selection
 545 effects calculated according to the additive partitioning ¹ method along the substrate gradient. Error
 546 bars denote s.e.m.

547



549 **Supplementary Figure 2 | A major effect locus driving complementarity between genotypes. a,**
 550 **QTL mapping of SCA variation across allelic diversity levels using a marker regression technique**
 551 **by contrasting SCAs of mono-allelic RIL mixtures (BB and SS) with bi-allelic mixtures (BS). b,**
 552 **Pot-level productivity of each genotype composition (average of four blocks) in dependence of**
 553 **allelic composition at marker MSAT4.9. n = 817 pots/210 compositions**

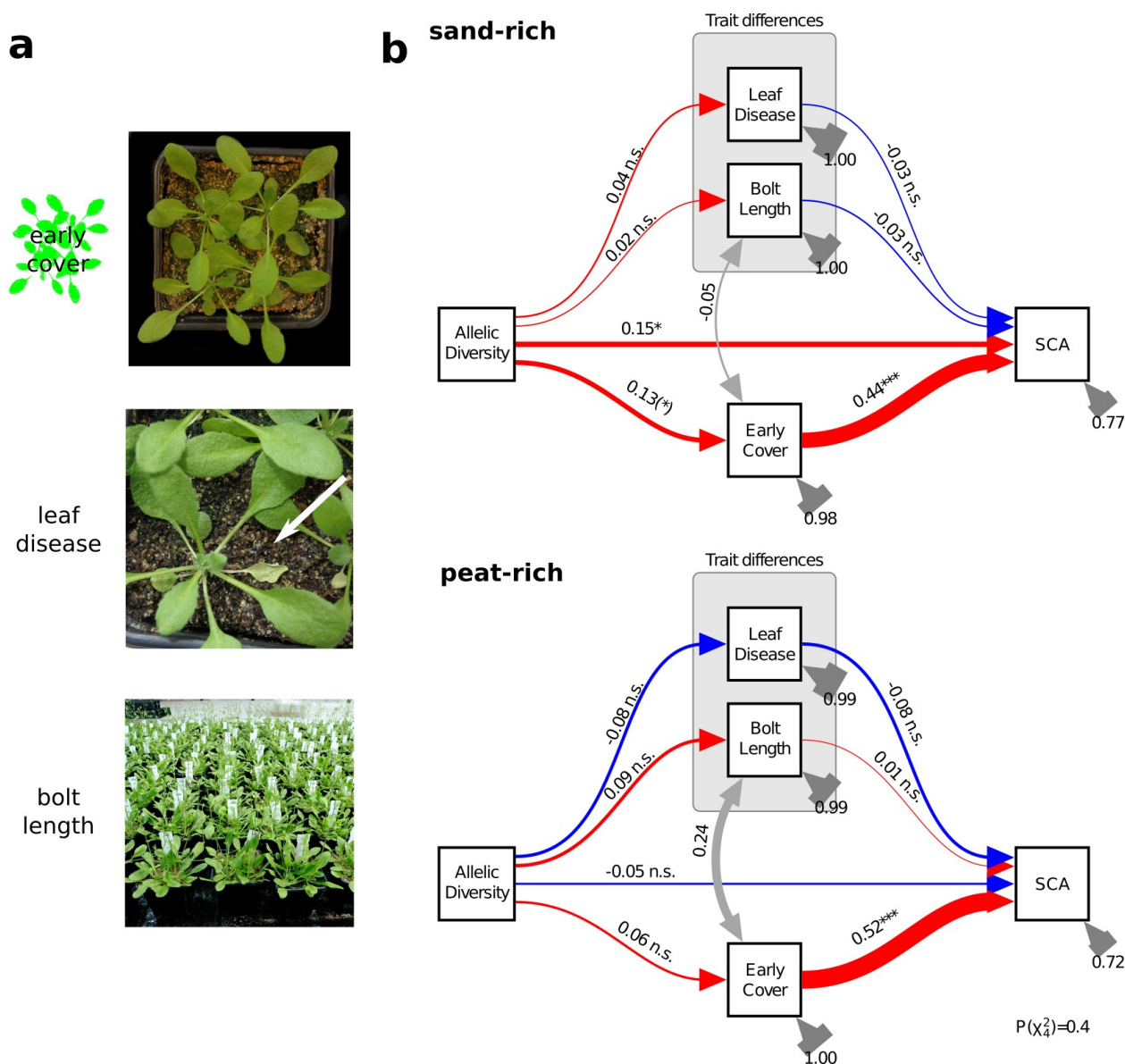


554 **Supplementary Figure 3 | Fine-mapping and persistence of allelic diversity effects in near-**
 555 **isogenic line. a,** The comparison of the reconstructed genotype of NIL r10 (HMM Viterbi-path
 556 across all chromosomes, homozygous on lower arm of chromosome 4) in comparison to publicly
 557 available molecular marker-based genotyping data of the ancestral line from which it was derived
 558 (heterozygous on lower arm of chromosome 4) – showing a high degree of congruence between the
 559 re-constructed genotype based on whole-genome resequencing and the marker data. **b,** Schematic
 560 outline of a possible cause of the high mapping resolution achieved through the diallel design. A
 561 major advantage of the design is the joint dependency of community-level allelic diversity on
 562 recombinations *within* and *between* recombinant inbred lines, such that mapping resolution
 563 increases very quickly. **c,** Extreme example of SCA variation across genotype mixtures all
 564 containing one specific genotype (NIL r146, homozygous for the Bay-allele at locus Chr4@16.92),

565 either in combinations with NILs carrying the Sha-allele (dark blue bars) or the Bay-allele (dark red
 566 bars). Shown are the data from sand-rich soil only.

567

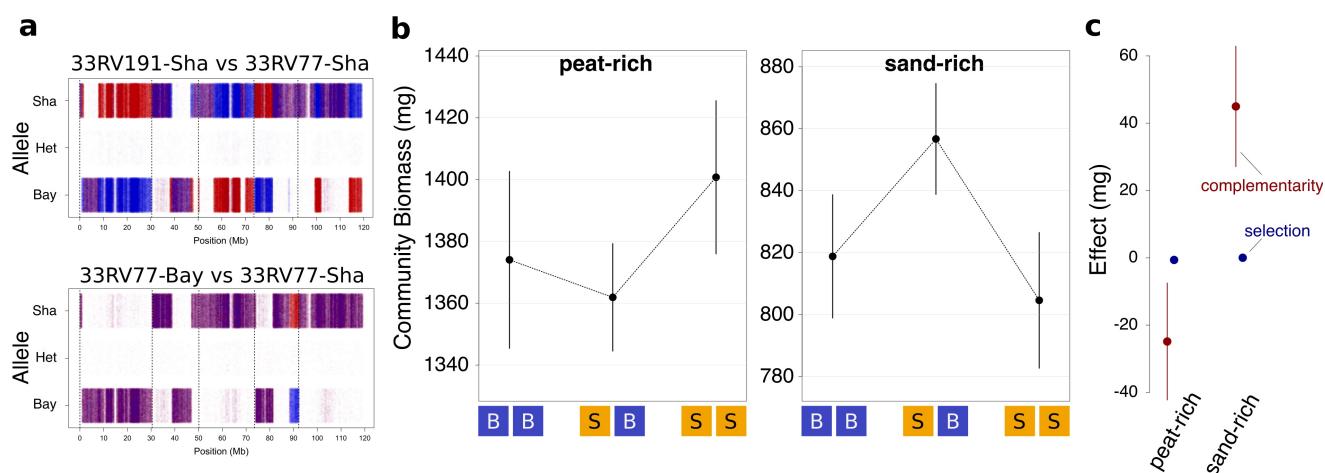
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570 **Supplementary Figure 4 | Observed above-ground trait variation does not explain**
 571 **overyielding of diallelic mixtures. a**, Traits measured in the NIL diallel as proxy for productivity
 572 (early growth projected leaf cover), disease susceptibility (leaf disease at 30 days after sowing) or
 573 phenology (bolt length at 35 days after sowing) **b**, Path diagram of multi-group structural equation

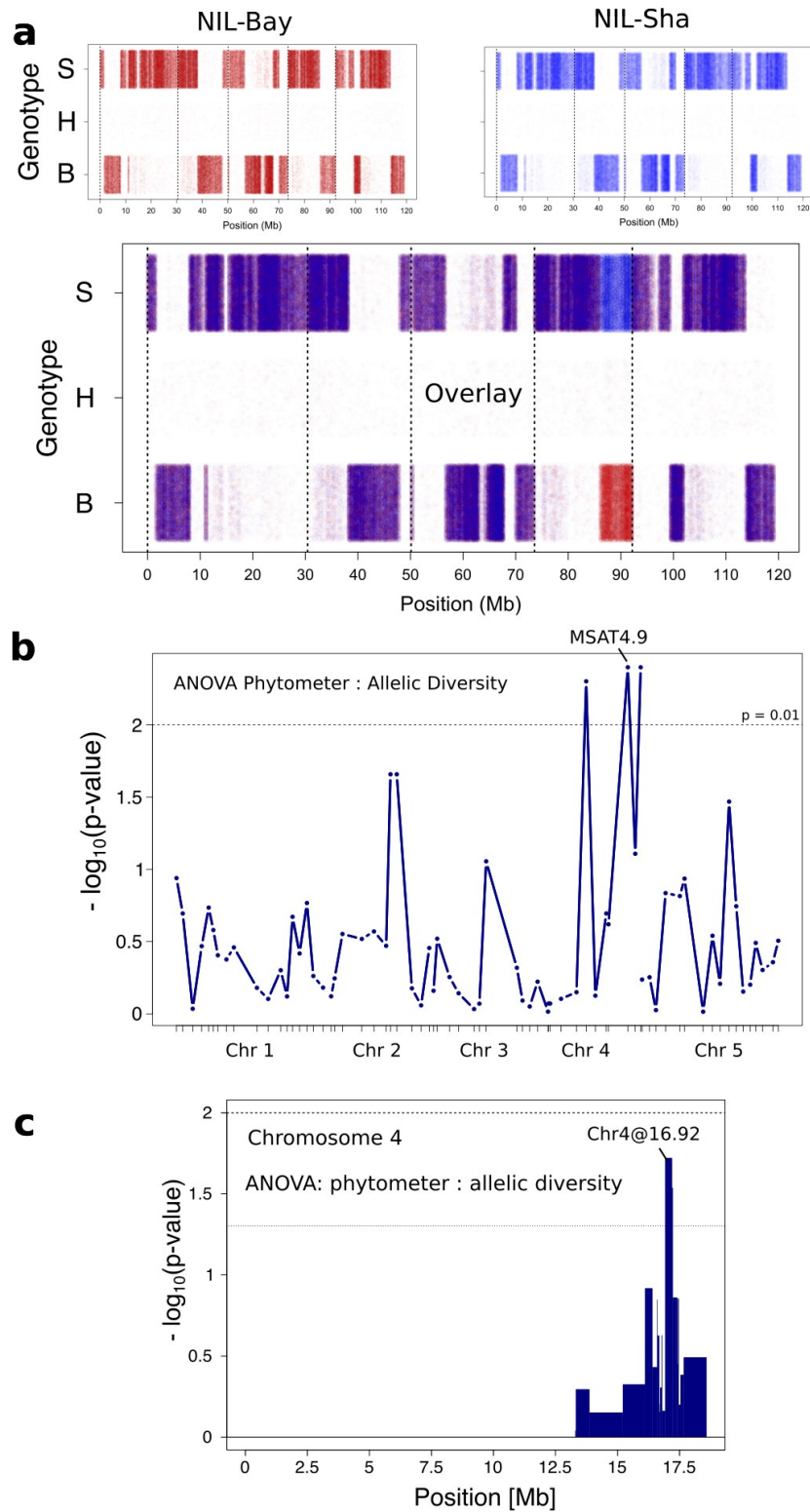
574 model showing direct effects of allelic diversity at locus Chr4@16.92 on SCA on sandy but not on
 575 peat soil. Red and blue arrows show positive and negative standardized path coefficients,
 576 respectively. n.s. = not significant. (*) = $p < 0.1$; * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$.

577



579 **Supplementary Figure 5 | Soil-dependent effect of allelic diversity on overyielding and**
 580 **statistical complementarity and selection effects¹ in an independent near-isogenic background.**

581 **a**, Overlay of genotype calls at all polymorphic sites across the genome (Sha and Bay = homozygous
 582 for respective allele, het = heterozygous) of lines used for a mendelization. Top: a comparison of the
 583 genetically independent backgrounds 33RV191-Sha (in red, this background was used for the fine-
 584 mapping shown in Fig. 3) and line 33RV77-Sha (in blue) is shown. At the bottom, a comparison of the
 585 near-isogenic lines 33RV77-Sha (red) vs 33RV77-Bay (blue), the two lines that were used in the
 586 experiment shown in b and c. Purple regions depict overlap of genotype calls, vertical lines separate the
 587 different chromosomes. **b**, Mean \pm s.e. of final aboveground biomass of communities consisting
 588 either of 33RV77-Sha plants only (BB), of mixed communities (BS), or of communities consisting
 589 of 33RV77-Bay plants only (SS) on either peat-rich (left) or sand-rich (right) soil. **c**,
 590 Complementarity and selection effects sensu Loreau and Hector calculated from the experiment
 591 shown in b.



592 **Supplementary Figure 6 | Soil feedback experiments.** a, Genotype calls at all polymorphic sites
 593 across the genome (B = homozygous for the Bay allele, H = heterozygous, S = homozygous for the
 594 Sha allele) obtained by genome re-sequencing phytometer genotypes NIL-Bay (33RV191-Bay, top

595 left, red) and NIL-Sha (33RV191-Sha, top right, blue). The overlay of the genotype calls of both
596 lines (bottom) confirms that these lines are isogenic but for variation on lower arm of chromosome
597 four. The two phytometers were employed on soil derived from the NIL diallel. **b, c**, QTL mapping
598 by marker regression of phytometer-specific responses to soil legacy of previous generation allelic
599 diversity (i.e. allele-diversity \times phytometer [Phy \times AD] interaction in Supplementary Table 1, but in a
600 model without adjusting for diallel pot biomass). The mapping of diversity effects through such
601 influences on soil legacy could have been applied to the identification and fine-mapping of the same
602 major effect locus, without ever measuring biomass productivity (albeit with slightly relaxed
603 statistical criteria). Shown are negative \log_{10} -transformed P-values for each marker position in the
604 RIL (b) or genotype block in the NIL (c) diallels.

605

606 **Supplementary Discussion**

607 As outlined in Figures 1 and 4, and as described in the Methods, we performed two soil-feedback
608 experiments to test whether allelic diversity effects extend across generations. We accounted for
609 potential effects explainable by variation in plant productivity during the soil training phase (e.g.
610 nutrient draw-down or environmental correlations) in linear models (terms *diallel biomass* and
611 *diallel biomass \times soil* as described in the Methods section). Significantly different soil conditioning
612 through allelic diversity, as assessed by phytometer performance in a next growing period, was
613 interpreted as an “extended phenotype”² (i.e. a legacy of allelic mixture that persists through time in
614 the soil, even after removal of the original plant communities). These soil factor-mediated allelic
615 legacy effects interact with phytometer genotype, giving rise to phytometer-specific responses (term
616 “Phy \times AD” in Supplementary Table 1).

617 As we emphasize, the specific mechanisms underlying both soil training and phytometer responses
618 await further experiments, since the response patterns (Fig. 4) do not allow for a simple mechanistic
619 model. One reason why it is difficult to infer specific mechanisms (e.g. specific soil factors, and

620 their interactions with genetic variants) is the number of variables that differed between the two
621 experiments because of constraints on experimental design: 1) environmental conditions (different
622 calendar dates, different batches of soil); 2) genetic variation in the two diallel population (RILs vs
623 NILs), potentially resulting in different effects of epistasis; and 3) phytometer genotypes (parental
624 lines vs NILs).

625 In the RIL diallel, we used the two parental accession Bay and Sha as phytometers and a split-plot
626 design to test for differential responses of these phytometer to soil conditioning. After the NIL
627 diallel, we used two near-isogenic phytometer (33RV191-Bay and 33RV191-Sha) as phytometers in
628 a similar test for differential responses to soil conditioning. Naively, one might expect
629 approximately congruent responses of the phytometers carrying the same alleles at the diversity
630 locus under question, i.e. the parental genotype Bay in the RIL diallel (Figure 4 b, yellow lines) and
631 the NIL-Bay genotype in the NIL diallel (Figure 4 c, yellow lines) might respond similarly to the
632 legacy of allelic diversity. However, this was not the case. For example, the Bay genotype grown on
633 RIL diallel soil responded positively to conditioning by allelic diversity, whereas the NIL-Bay
634 genotype in the NIL diallel responded somewhat negatively to conditioning by allelic diversity. It is
635 noteworthy that the pattern found for Bay on RIL diallel soil is opposite to what would be expected
636 if soil legacy was driven by a simple productivity-related depletion of resources in the conditioning
637 phase; this suggests that allelic diversity alleviates a negative soil factor (e.g. inhibits enemies), or
638 promotes a positive factor (e.g. mutualistic organisms).

639 Despite differences, the RIL and NIL soil-feedback experiments nevertheless convincingly
640 demonstrate i) that allelic diversity effects extend across time through soil conditioning, and ii) that
641 phytometer genotype determines the response to such conditioning (phytometer \times allelic diversity
642 interaction, both experiments, see Table S1). The fact that allelic diversity effects within a
643 community and allele-specific legacy effects on individuals separated in time map to the same locus
644 suggests to us that both are related to similar mechanisms.

645

646 **Supplementary References**

647

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649 experiments. *Nature* **412**, 72–76 (2001).
- 650 2. Dawkins, R. *The Extended Phenotype*. (Oxford University Press, 1982).
- 651